

THE  
KRESGE  
FOUNDATION

**BOOST**

*Boosting Opportunities for Social and  
Economic Mobility for Families*

FUNDING  
GUIDELINES

**Boosting Opportunities for Social and Economic Mobility for Families (BOOST)  
(Education and Human Services Programs)  
Funding Opportunity**

**Release Date: June 24, 2019**

**Due Date: July 26, 2019**

**1. The Kresge Foundation's Education and Human Services Programs**

The Kresge Foundation is a private, national foundation that works to expand opportunities in America's cities through grantmaking and social investments in arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services and community development in Detroit. Why focus on cities? It's because more than 80 percent of Americans with low incomes live in America's cities, which puts them on the front line of our nation's most pressing challenges. Whether we can drive lasting prosperity. Whether we close the widening gap between rich and poor. Whether we can promote equality and expand opportunity.

Together, the Education and Human Services Programs seek to expand opportunity in cities through complementary strategies. The Human Services Program is focused on achieving person-centered systems change that accelerates social and economic mobility for children and families using a racial equity lens. A key element of social and economic mobility is postsecondary access and success. Kresge's Education Program focuses on expanding postsecondary access and success for students with low incomes and students of color.

For more information, please visit [www.kresge.org](http://www.kresge.org).

**2. Background**

America's human services and postsecondary sectors help families across America achieve their version of the American dream. Supportive programs provided by the human services sector lifted nearly 48 million people above the poverty line in 2015. However, exiting poverty is only a partial success: economists agree that today's jobs that offer family-sustaining income require the type of learning that can only be acquired through high-quality postsecondary education and training.

Recognizing the return on higher education, people in America are flocking to postsecondary education. And today's college students better reflect the overall population. More than 40 percent of students are people of color, and 37 percent are over the age of 25.<sup>1</sup> It's also important to note that 3.8 million people, which is more than one in five students, are parents.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, the lack of alignment between human services organizations and postsecondary education institutions creates significant challenges for families seeking to increase their social and economic mobility. For students, juggling work, family and school—without the critical supports that human services organizations provide—often leads them to opt out. Meanwhile, many people supported by

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.luminafoundation.org/todays-student/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://iwpr.org/publications/parents-college-numbers/>

human services organizations face barriers when they try to enter higher education, or if they are enrolled, aren't connected to high-quality educational pathways that lead to family-sustaining careers. In short, a much greater proportion of underserved community college students could persist and graduate with support from human services agencies, while clients of human services could experience better mobility through postsecondary attainment.

Prior philanthropically-supported efforts have started to address these issues, typically from one of two approaches. The first consists of previous efforts that centered on helping community colleges deliver non-academic supports that lead to college access and success. Examples include [Working Student Success Network](#), [Single Stop](#), and [Beyond Financial Aid](#). The second body of work centered on two-generation, whole-family approaches that considered outcomes for both parent and child. Examples of these efforts include the [Aspen Accelerating Postsecondary Success for Parents](#) and [Georgia's Two-Generation Innovation grants](#).

Regardless of approach, both the human services and postsecondary education sectors can deliver on their role in helping people achieve the American dream through better alignment with the labor market. While both community colleges and nonprofit agencies help individuals secure jobs, some of these jobs, even those requiring a postsecondary credential, do not enable individuals to provide for a family or promote career advancement.

Research from Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce is clear: “Some occupational clusters pay better than others, and people with less education can sometimes out-earn people with more, principally because of occupational differences.”<sup>3</sup> Building on this nuanced view of the labor market, Jobs for the Future (JFF) published a 2018 report, [When Is a Job Just a Job—and When Can It Launch a Career?](#), describing springboard and lifetime jobs. Springboard jobs (those with strong professional and income growth over time) and lifetime jobs (those typically well paid with long-term stability, but little occupational advancement) are critical to supporting upward mobility. Stronger ties to specific occupations, careers, and jobs may enable some associate degrees and certificates to provide a better return on investment for students.

### **3. Overview of the Funding Opportunity**

The Education and Human Services Programs invite BOOST proposals from existing partnerships between Achieving the Dream community colleges and nonprofit human services organizations that connect people in cities with low incomes to critical human services supports and educational pathways that advance social and economic mobility.

Through this \$3.6 million funding opportunity, Kresge will award up to eight grants of up to \$450,000 each over three years. Respondents can propose a 6-month planning period (remainder of the 2019-20 academic year) followed by a two-and-a-half-year implementation phase.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/the-college-payoff/#full-report>

We are seeking solutions that bring together community colleges' educational pathways, human services nonprofits' supportive services and workforce development's career pathways. These partnerships should address barriers to upward mobility such as a lack of knowledge about high-quality educational programs; the need to juggle multiple responsibilities such as work and family; inadequate childcare; food and housing insecurity; and others identified by the community.

In contrast to the prior efforts described in the previous section, this effort does not center on the community college or the human services nonprofit. BOOST gives equal standing to both partners and focuses on the partnership needed to support families to building educational and career pathways with family-supporting wages. These types of partnerships exist throughout the country, and this opportunity seeks to catalyze those existing efforts.

In addition to supporting adults to and through postsecondary education, proposed work should also address their post-completion destination, namely entry into family-supporting careers. Drawing on JFF's framework, [MIT's Living Wage Calculator](#) or other national resources, and local data analysis, respondents should identify family-sustaining jobs with characteristics of either springboard or lifetime jobs in their city and the educational pathways and supports that will enable the ultimate beneficiaries of their partnerships to access and succeed in them.

In bringing together effective practices of human services nonprofits and community colleges with more informed approaches to careers, funded proposals will blend thoughtful programs with broader system changes such as improved cross-sector coordination; strengthened data systems and outcome metric; new financing models; and policies and practices that support social and economic mobility. For more information, Nancy Latham's [A Practical Guide to Evaluating Systems Change in a Human Services System Context](#) presents a useful framework.

The proposed work should address the systemic barriers preventing collaboration at scale with substantial impact and include a plan for sustainability after the grant ends. Because partnerships benefit from ongoing learning and evaluation activities, proposals that include individual grant evaluations will be scored more favorably.

#### **4. Additional Benefits**

Partnerships selected for this opportunity will receive other benefits from participating. First, the Foundation will convene the selected grantees as part of a national learning cohort, likely twice each year starting in early 2020. Second, through partners, the Foundation will provide technical assistance anchored in the collective needs of the communities. These needs will be informed by questions in the application process, as well as information gathered from selected grantee partners. Third, an evaluation will facilitate learning by the participants and the Foundation. More detailed information about cohort engagement and convenings will be provided to applicants selected to submit a full proposal.

To support our collective learning, the participating colleges may be required to share de-identified data with the Foundation and its evaluation partners. Human services nonprofits will also have data reporting

requirements aligned with [Ascend's outcomes toolbox](#). These expectations will be clearly communicated to the finalists who advance to the full proposal phase of the selection process.

## 5. Eligible Applicants

This funding opportunity is open to partnerships between community colleges and human services nonprofits in cities. This section outlines the minimum qualifications needed to apply; the next section describes the criteria used to select the final cohort.

For the purpose of this opportunity, a **city** must adhere to U.S. Census Bureau's definition of a Metropolitan Statistical Area that contains a city of 50,000 or more people.

A **qualifying partnership** must include at least one community college and at least one human services nonprofit organization that meets the following requirements:

- **The human services nonprofit(s)** must advance social and economic mobility of their clients, and exhibit the qualities of [Next Generation \(NextGen\) Human Services organizations](#), which:
  - Are person-centered.
  - Are outcomes-based.
  - Are data-driven.
  - Apply a racial equity lens.
  - Focus on greater sector impact and systems change.

The direct service nonprofits should also apply a two-generation, whole-family approach as defined by [Ascend at the Aspen Institute](#). The two generation, whole family approach focuses equally and intentionally on services and opportunities for the child and the adults in their lives, including the important role of fathers. They articulate and track outcomes for both children and adults simultaneously. The core components of two-generation, whole-family approaches include education, economic supports, social capital and health and well-being.

- **The community college(s)** must be an [Achieving the Dream](#) member(s) located in a city. Achieving the Dream colleges have the requisite building blocks for this opportunity, such as stronger data capacity and a commitment to racial equity.

To facilitate the application process, one of these two partners must be the lead applicant for the grant portal, Fluxx. It may be the community college OR the human services nonprofit. Should the human services nonprofit serve as the lead applicant, it will have to meet other requirements as outlined in the Frequently Asked Questions document.

Both partners **must** submit a letter of support. Partnerships without these two letters of support will be disqualified.

## 6. Selection Criteria

This section outlines funding preferences that will guide the review of the letter of inquiries (phase 1) and the proposals (phase 2). Final selection for the cohort will take into consideration these elements, as well as the resulting cohort composition (e.g., geographic diversity, etc.).

- Have a well-articulated focus on racial equity and strong understanding of the lived experiences of the clients of human services nonprofits and community college students.
- Demonstrate an established partnership with a track record of collaboration and shared commitment to upward mobility for people with low incomes as evidenced by letters of support, signed memoranda of understanding, and/or financial commitment by the partners. This funding opportunity is not designed to support the formation of new partnerships, but to strengthen existing ones.
- Evidence of a strong understanding of their local labor market and career pathways that provide family-sustaining wages and advance upward mobility. [MIT's Living Wage Calculator](#) may help applicants identify the wages needed to sustain a family with children. Ideally, applicants will be able to identify springboard and lifetime jobs in their city as defined earlier in the document. Provide a clear description of the data that will be leveraged to understand the local labor market and the labor market outcomes to be achieved by the partnership, as well as any data-sharing agreements or policies that will be developed to support this component.
- Present a solid logic or theory of action delineating how their activities will lead to increased mobility for residents with low incomes in their cities. Important interim outcomes will be increasing in college access and success. More competitive applicants will marshal empirical evidence to support their logic and claims of impact.
- Blend thoughtfully-designed programs with broader system changes such as improved cross-sector coordination; strengthened data systems and outcome metrics; new financing models; and policies and practices that support social and economic mobility.
- Articulate how the partnerships and any specific efforts advanced by the partners will create change at scale. Scaled change can be achieved through a variety of means. For example, it could be a policy change that impacts hundreds to thousands of students/clients. It could also be a pilot program designed, evaluated and scaled, if warranted by the evaluation findings, to serve hundreds to thousands of students/clients within the three-year period.
- Consider the long-term sustainability of their partnership, potential projects, and ultimately the improved outcomes for families with low incomes. Sustainability can be viewed from multiple perspectives, ranging from the financial stability of the partnership or its services to a permanent policy change that creates a new normal. Applicants will be most competitive if they address how the change created by the partnership will endure beyond the grant period.

- Include evaluation and learning, with clear indicators of progress and success at the program and systems level. Learning and evaluation efforts ideally would help define the problems tackled by the partnerships, inform the design of any new efforts, provide feedback with which to make mid-course corrections and improvements, and ultimately determine whether any changes are making a difference for ultimate beneficiaries. Program-level evaluations meeting What Works Clearinghouse’s [standards](#) will be most competitive.

## 7. Applicant and Selection Key Dates

- **July 17, 2019 11:59 p.m. (EST): Grantee Portal (Fluxx) Registration Deadline.** Respondents will need to register for an account for your lead applicant (community college OR human services nonprofit) on Kresge’s Fluxx portal.
- **July 26, 2019 11:59 p.m. (EST): Letter of Inquiry Submission Deadline.** Respondents will need to submit a letter of inquiry and project budget via Kresge’s Fluxx portal.
- **Mid-August: Initial Notification.** Kresge will notify respondents whether their proposed project has been selected to move forward to a round of virtual site visits and full proposal.
- **Late August: Virtual Site Visits.** Kresge will conduct a virtual site visit to each finalist organization through a two-hour video conference.
- **Mid-to-Late September: Proposal Submission Deadline.** Respondents must submit a full proposal via Kresge’s online grantee portal.
- **Early November: Final Notification.** Kresge will notify respondents about the final funding decisions. We anticipate the grant period will begin on December 1, 2019.

## 8. Phase 1: Letter of Inquiry Submission

To apply, submit a letter of inquiry for the first phase through [Kresge’s online grantee portal \(Fluxx\)](#) **no later than 11:59 p.m. (EST) on July 26, 2019.**

If you are or have previously been a Kresge grantee, please use your existing [Fluxx](#) credentials to apply. If you are a new applicant, you will need to register for an account for your organization before applying. Please note that it can take 5 to 7 days to receive your Fluxx credentials. The BOOST Funding Opportunity Fluxx Guide provides step-by-step instructions to begin your BOOST application. If you experience any issues when creating a Fluxx account, please contact our Program Operations Information Management (POIM) at [programoperations@kresge.org](mailto:programoperations@kresge.org). Note: Once you’ve secured a Fluxx account and accessed the online portal, under grant opportunities, select “Start a new RFP” and then select the correct initiative.

The online grantee portal will require respondents to complete and submit the following.

- **Narrative project description.** Respondents will provide a narrative explanation of their request via the online grantee portal (Fluxx). To support the creation of your submission, please find four appendices:
  - **Appendix 1: [Narrative Questions Preview](#).** A Word document outlining the narrative questions of the letter of inquiry (phase 1)—with the word count limits. (The questions for the full proposal or phase 2 are also included. Only select applicants will advance to phase 2. These are provided only for your information. Do not complete them now.)
  - **Appendix 2: [Frequently Asked Questions](#).** A PDF responding to frequently asked questions
  - **Appendix 3: [Budget Template](#).** An Excel spreadsheet that can serve as a sample budget
  - **Appendix 4: [Fluxx Guide and Preview](#).** A PDF providing a Fluxx preview and instructions for the letter of inquiry (phase 1).
- **Preliminary Project Budget.** Please use the budget template included with this release. Please include the full project budget, inclusive of the Kresge request, other funders, and any in-kind support from the partners. Please note the line items can be changed as needed.
- **Budget Narrative.** Provide preliminary justification for budget items and how monetary amounts were determined. If matching grants are provided, please detail that here, including the name(s) of the donor(s).
- **Letters of support or MOU (preferred).** Submit letters of support or memoranda of understanding that demonstrate meaningful engagement of the core partners. These documents will ideally specify the role and contribution of each partner. (Finalists will be required to have a signed MOU before a grant will be awarded.)
- **Census Data for your Metropolitan Statistical Area.** The Census Bureau website is currently undergoing updates. When the site is updated on July 1, we will provide updated instructions for pulling the correct data in the Frequently Asked Questions.

Note, if the budget, budget narrative, and at least two letters of support from the primary partners are not included, Fluxx will not allow the application to be submitted.